

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MEXICO 03028 110154Z

ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 824

INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

UNCLAS MEXICO 3028

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, MX

SUBJ: COMMENTS OF HOUSE SPEAKER O'NEILL TO VISITING

MEXICAN IPU DELEGATION

1. VIRTUALLY ALL MARCH 10 MEXICO CITY DAILIES (EXCEPT EXCELSIOR, SO FAR) CARRIED TELEX REPORT DATED WASHINGTON MARCH 9 TO EFFECT THAT SPEAKER OF HOUSE THOMAS O'NEILL DENIED MAKING REMARKS THAT EXCELSIOR WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT FAUSTO FERNANDEZ PONTE ATTRIBUTED TO HIM IMMEDIATELY PRIOR TO LOPEZ PORTILLO'S ADDRESS TO CONGRESS ON FEBRUARY 17 DURING HIS STATE VISIT TO WASHINGTON. (FERNANDEZ PONTE REPORTED THAT SPEAKER HAD SAID ADDRESSES TO CONGRESS BY VISITING CHIEFS OF STATE WASTED THE HOUSE'S VALUABLE TIME AND THAT HE HAD REQUESTED EXECUTIVE BRANCH NOT TO ASK CONGRESS TO HEAR SUCH ADDRESSES IN FUTURE.)

2. REPORTS STATE THAT SPEAKER O'NEILL, IN CONVERSATION WITH PRESIDENT OF MEXICAN CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES AUGUSTO GOMEZ VILLANUEVA (WHO IS LEADING MEXICAN DELEGATION TO WASHINGTON TO DISCUSS PLANS FOR UPCOMING MEXICAN-US PARLIAMENTARY MEETING) NOT ONLY DENIED MAKING THE STATEMENT THAT FERNANDEZ PONTE ATTRIBUTED TO HIM, BUT ASKED GOMEZ VILLANUEVA TO CARRY HIS BEST WISHES TO PRESIDENT LOPEZ

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 MEXICO 03028 110154Z

PORTILLO AND TO TELL HIM THAT SPEAKER O'NEILL WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO TALKING PERSONALLY WITH PRESIDENT DURING THE INTERPARLIAMENTARY MEETING IN MEXICO CITY IN MAY. REPORTS ADD THAT SPEAKER O'NEILL EXPRESSED HIS "PREOCCUPATION AND DISGUST" OVER EXCELSIOR'S TENDENTIOUS ARTICLE; TOLD GOMEZ VILLANUEVA THAT PRESIDENT LOPEZ PORTILLO'S SPEECH WAS OF GREAT INTEREST TO US; AND

SAID THAT PRESIDENT'S PERSONALITY, PREPARATION AND ATTITUDE HAD CONVINCED US OF HIS UNDERSTANDING OF BILATERAL AND INTERNATIONAL PROBLEMS.

3. ACCORDING TO REPORTS, O'NEILL-GOMEZ VILLANUEVA CONVERSATION TOOK PLACE IN PRESENCE OF CONGRESSMAN DE LA GARZA AND MEXICAN LEGISLATORS GILBERTO RUIZ ALMADA, HORACIO LABASTIDA (SENATORS) AND VICTOR MANZANILLA, GUILLERMO COSIO VIDAURRI, JORGE GARABITO, JUAN JOSE OSORIO, JORGE MENDICUTI AND PEDRO GONZALEZ AZCUAGA (DEPUTIES). LATER, HOUSE MAJORITY LEADER JIM WRIGHT, LLOYD BENTSEN, SENATE COORDINATOR OF THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY MEETING, AND CONGRESSMAN GUS YATRON, CHAIRMAN OF THE HOUSE INTERAMERICAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE, JOINED THE OTHERS FOR A LUNCH AT THE CAPITOL.

4. COMMENT: THIS REPORT SHOULD ASSUAGE MEXICAN PUBLIC OPINION, WHICH WAS AROUSED BY ORIGINAL ACCOUNT OF THE REMARKS ATTRIBUTED TO SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE.

EMBASSY WILL REPORT WHEN OR IF EXCELSIOR JOINS THE BANDWAGON IN CARRYING THE SPEAKER'S COMMENTS. THOMPSON

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